

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-04 USSS-00 SCCT-01 PM-03 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 DODE-00

SIL-01 LAB-01 OC-00 CCO-00 EB-04 COME-00 DOTE-00

FAA-00 PRS-01 SAM-01 /055 W

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R 011033Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5716

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, OVIP, ILAB, JA

SUBJECT: TRADE UNION ACTIVITY DURING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

REF: (A) TOKYO 12292; (B) TOKYO 12304

1. SUMMARY. ONE, POSSIBLY TWO, EVENTS ARE SCHEDULED BY TRADE UNIONS DURING PERIOD OF PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS OPPOSING PRIME MINISTER TANAKA, NUCLEAR ARMS AND PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT WILL BE CALLED NOVEMBER 17 OR 18. SPONSORS STRESS THERE WILL BE NO VIOLENCE. ON NOVEMBER 19, AS REGULAR PART OF LABOR'S AUTUMN STRUGGLE TO WIN ANTI-INFLATION ALLOWANCES, UNIONS IN TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WILL ENGAGE IN SPOT STRIKES AND OTHER DISPUTE TACTICS. PLANS NOT YET FIRM AS TO HOW MUCH TACTICS WILL BE SYMBOLIC, E.G. 30 MINUTE STRIKES OR WORKSHOP RALLIES, AND HOW MUCH SUBSTANTIAL WORK STOPPAGES OF UP TO 24 HOURS. BUS AND AIRLINE EMPLOYEES MAY PARTICIPATE, BUT AIRPORT CONTROL FACILITIES NOT RPT NOT AFFECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLES PLANNED PRINCIPALLY BY JAPAN'S LARGEST LABOR CONFEDERATION, GENERAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (SOHYO), ARE ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES. IN

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POLITICAL ARENA IT HAS SCHEDULED NATIONWIDE RALLIES AND

Demonstrations November 17 opposing (A) Prime Minister Tanaka and his LDP-controlled government, (B) nuclear arms in Japan, and (C) President Ford's visit. Joint sponsors in rallies are National Federation of Independent Unions (Churitsuroren), JSP, JCP and perhaps Komeito. Churitsuroren reportedly unenthusiastic, feeling that the political issues are too remote from workers' real concerns--wages and inflation. JCP demanding that date be changed to 18th when President Ford due to arrive. Sohyo and JSP are currently debating what action to take.

3. On economic front Sohyo and Churitsuroren are sponsoring autumn struggle with principal objectives of opposing personnel retrenchments in industry and of winning anti-inflation allowances equivalent to one month's base pay in addition to regular year-end bonuses. As reported in RefTel (B), climax of third round in autumn campaign is "Unified Action Day" scheduled in November 18-20 period. (Schedule was established before dates of presidential visit were known.) But while Sohyo can make overall plans, its individual affiliated unions must both agree to them and provide the muscle to make them effective. Unions in private industry, in view of present business slump, are proving reluctant to launch strikes. Public corporation and national enterprise unions are left to spearhead the campaign, and some of them feel timing for strikes will not be appropriate until December. Some plans are firm, other unions have yet to settle on a course of action: on November 19 JNR workers (Kokuro) will strike certain freight trains and freight yards for 24 hours. This will slow down service and disrupt it but how seriously cannot yet be determined. Kokuro will also refuse to collect tickets and strike at ticket sales counters for 12 hours. JNR locomotive engineers (Doro) will strike for 24 hours at 24 different locations. Action by Federation of Private Railway Workers Union (Shitetsusoren) in doubt. Its unions in big companies may or may not strike for 12 hours, issue still being hotly debated. Maller rail line unions presently favor strikes but have not decided whether they will be real or just symbolic, e.g. 30 minute strikes or workshop rallies. Nationwide, postal limited official use

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Workers Union (Zentei) plans to call out 12,000 and telecommunications workers 20,000--about 6 percent of the membership of each union. Bus drivers and airline personnel have agreed in principle to participate in November 19 disputes but have yet to determine how. They are small enterprise unions and each is expected to decide its own tactics independently.

4. JAPANESE NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS ARE NOT RPT
NOT PARTICIPATING IN NOVEMBER 19 DISPUTE TACTICS; SO ALL
AIRPORT CONTROL PERSONNEL, EMPLOYEES OF THE TRANSPORTATION
MINISTRY, WILL BE ON DUTY AS USUAL.

5. COMMENT. IF FINALLY SCHEDULED NOVEMBER 18, UNION
DEMONSTRATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY.
STRIKE ACTIVITY ON NOVEMBER 19 WILL BE DIRECTED PRINCIPALLY
AT EMPLOYERS. GOJ LABOR MINISTRY HAS EXPRESSED CON-
FIDENCE THAT LABOR WILL NOT LINK PRESIDENT FORD VISIT WITH
JAPANESE INFLATION PROBLEM: AND THAT UNIONS PROTESTS WILL
NOT IMPACT ADVERSELY ON PRESIDENTIAL VISIT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, LABOR UNIONS, LABOR OBJECTIVES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TOKYO14278
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740313-0605
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741177/aaaacnpk.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) TOKYO 12292; (B) TOKYO 12304
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRADE UNION ACTIVITY DURING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT
TAGS: PBOR, OVIP, ELAB, JA, (FORD, GERALD R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005